



“ART IN PARK: HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE PARK”

On Saturday, February 24th, Children of Inmates, Inc. (COI) welcomed children and caregivers to participate in an outdoor painting exercise, known as Arts in the Park Hobby Session. Children of all different ages created colorful canvases, learning to draw, paint and let their imaginations run wild. Monsters, rainbows, superheros and landscapes floated out of the kids minds and onto the canvases. Caregivers, some of whom also created, experienced how their children captured their ideas in drawings.

Luis Pedroza, a Senior Change Engineer with COI, led the activity. He stated **“Art is a valuable tool in children's development. Through it, children can communicate their emotions and innermost feelings. Art in the Park is not only about creating future artists but also about developing sensitive human beings.”**

For children, these moments of creativity are critical to their development of self. The family-based sessions become positive memories – snapshots in time that will stay with the children for a lifetime. To COI, seeing their art, their joy and their connections to each other is a priceless masterpiece we treasure!

COI facilitates a wide variety of hobby groups such as Arts-in-the-Park, Gardening, Wheels (Roller skating, skateboarding, etc), drumming and on and on. What hobbies are you interested in pursuing? We want to do programming with you, not for you!

Please take our survey and let us know!
[Click here](#) or scan this code to complete the survey.



President's Message



At our hobby events, the kids have fun but so do the moms, grandmas, aunts, and even a few dads. They jump in, participating in the fun activities, and guiding their children and other children. One of the key benefits of caregivers participating occurs when they talk to each other. The benefits of these chats cannot be overstated.

Being a single caregiver because of parental incarceration can be an isolating experience. However, when caregivers come together to share their stories, insights, and struggles, a profound sense of connection and support emerges.

At a recent Saturday event, I chatted with two caregivers, and we all shared our challenges with the housing market, especially the Section 8 lottery process. Often caregivers face similar situations and sharing their experiences creates a vast pool of wisdom, enabling us all to navigate these difficulties more effectively.

Beyond the exchange of practical tips, caregiver conversations foster emotional well-being. One caregiver said, "I spend all my time with my four children in the house – it's so nice to get out of the house, catch a breath of fresh air and talk to an adult." Before she could finish her statement, the other responded, "same here."

At COI, we are working to create opportunities for children but also for caregivers – places where they can have shared understandings and develop a unique support system where they can express their thoughts and emotions without judgment. We seek to reduce the feelings of isolation and burnout that caregivers commonly experience. Knowing that others too are looking for ways to cope creates a powerful sense of unity and shared purpose.

We hope that you will bring your children to have fun and learn at our hobby events. We also hope that you will join our supportive community. Our success measure is that you can leave with a new friend or two and a smile!

*Shellie Solomon, Ph.D. President,
Children of Inmate, Inc.*

WE ARE BACK ON THE ROAD! SUMMER FAMILIES BONDING VISITS ARE COMING SOON!

Though the Covid-19 pandemic slowed us down, we have completed over 600 family bonding visits to Florida correctional facilities. During the family bonding visits, we focus on reconnecting children to their incarcerated parents so that we can help reunite and rebuild the family connections.

COI's family bonding visits are not like regular visitation – they are specially designed for children with toys, coloring, board games, books to read and a family meal. They also include a family meal. We top it off with a civic education activity. This spring break, we are focusing on “earth in balance” and doing activities about temperature and the hemispheres.

After the visits, we will be sponsoring an outing to a fun event. These important after-events allow children (and caregivers) to process the emotions of the leaving their loved one. They help children relax, bonding with other children in their same situation and leave with a happy feeling, all critically important to brain development. For the caregivers, it is an opportunity to meet and learn from others facing similar challenges.

If you are interested in participating in a Bonding Visit, please take the survey by [clicking here](#) or scanning the code.



Thank You So much
For allow me to see
my Daddy. It Brings
3 years

Thank you for this fantastic experience to see and reconnect with my father. It truly was a blessing to see my father after 11 years. I was filled with joy to talk, see, and hug my pops.

I truly truly truly appreciate what y'all done for me & my son!
Thank You! Keep Comins & bringing smiles & joy!

Thank you for this amazing Program!

Triston Daddy Mommy

A hand-drawn drawing in green and blue ink showing three stylized faces. The faces are labeled 'Triston', 'Daddy', and 'Mommy' in blue ink below them.

FOR DONATIONS OR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS:



Web: childrenofinmates.org



Email: info@childrenofinmates.org



Phone: 1-888-757-KIDZ (5439)

